

Best Of

Tree Country

the external newsletter of the SC Forestry Commission

FALL 2021



South Carolina
Forestry Commission

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Best of Tree Country

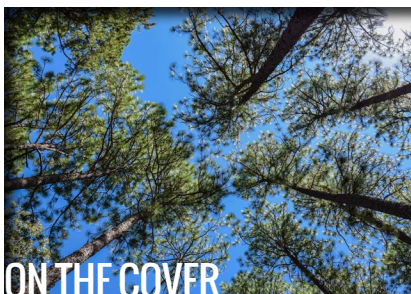
Best of Tree Country is published quarterly by the South Carolina Forestry Commission in the winter, spring, summer and fall.

The Commission is solely responsible for the content of this newsletter, but welcomes appropriate submissions from allied organizations, industry partners, consultant foresters, elected officials, landowners and private citizens.

Please contact SCFC Director of Communications Doug Wood at (803) 896-8820 or dwood@scfc.gov to submit information, articles and/or photographs.

The Forestry Commission reserves the right to edit or exclude submissions based on its own editorial criteria.

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ON THE COVER

The cover photo features a pine canopy at Harbison State Forest.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Success Story

The Harbison State Forest Environmental Education Center received a museum-style makeover.



Bradford pear sales banned in SC

South Carolina will ban the nursery sale of Bradford pear trees and any other pear trees grown on the commonly used *Pyrus calleryana* rootstock beginning in 2024.



Western Fire Details

SCFC personnel share their experiences and photos from their Western fire details.



Junior Forester Program

The SCFC environmental education staff launched a free Junior Forester program at Harbison State Forest.

WHAT IS A WORKING FOREST?

SUCCESS
STORIES

Just like all four of the other state forests that the South Carolina Forestry Commission manages on the public's behalf, Harbison is what we call a working forest, meaning it is actively managed for multiple uses.

Those purposes include wildlife enhancement, soil and water conservation, pine straw and timber sales, research, sheer aesthetic beauty and of course recreation.



Recreation

Harbison offers a wide range of recreational opportunities, including hiking, biking, picnicking and photography.



Wildlife habitat

Forests provide cover, travel corridors and food for many species of animals as well as a place for plants to thrive.



Aesthetic beauty

A well managed forest provides a visually appealing view to visitors of Harbison.



Timber production
Harbison is a self-sufficient forest, meaning it does not rely on taxes for funding. HSF generates the majority of its revenue from sustainable timber harvest operations.



Education

Children of all ages visit Harbison throughout the year with their schools or small groups to learn more about forestry and natural resources.

HSF Ed Center gets a museum-style makeover

Lobby transformed into a forestry-themed interpretive experience for visitors

Harbison State Forest has always been the hub from which most of the agency's educational programming and outreach is delivered. Not only was the current infrastructure of Harbison built with that purpose in mind, but the agency's education staff is also based in Columbia at the Harbison office, which is appropriately named the Environmental Education Center. Until recently, however, something was missing from the Ed Center, namely an appropriate forestry-themed visual and learning experience reflective of the building's – and education staff's – mission.

For years Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel had been wanting to enhance the visitor experience upon entering the Ed Center. Before the current refurbishment of the building, the lobby contained a random mish-mash of forestry-related history displays, assorted see-and-touch tables featuring bugs and other stuffed forest animals, but the space lacked a clear

focus that didn't really reinforce the multifaceted mission of the agency or convey the broad scope of forestry in general.

No longer!

Thanks to the vision of Schnabel and Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley, the Ed Center lobby has been transformed into a forestry educational experience of its



Before the renovation, the Ed Center lobby contained an outdated collection of forestry-related history displays, assorted see-and-touch tables featuring bugs and other stuffed forest animals, but the space lacked a clear educational, or interpretive, focus.

own, complete with museum-style exhibits and interpretive displays.

With the help of a US Forest Service grant aimed at amplifying “agency capacity and staff efficacy in educating the public about forests, trees, and the importance of forests and

“This project is a dream come true for us,” said Schnabel of his and Foley’s long-held vision for the space.

conservation,” Schnabel and Foley set about securing competitive bids from interpretive exhibit vendors to creatively reimagine the space in the Ed Center.

The result, after months of the Communications and Education staffs working with South Carolina-based Skyline Exhibits on messaging, graphics and design concepts, is a stunning makeover that gives visitors a primer on the history of Harbison itself as well as an introduction to what Schnabel calls the “three pillars of forestry.”

People entering the Ed Center now are guided through a series of vignettes that are both visually compelling and educationally focused.

Visitors can thumb their way through flip books on the wall that contain forestry-related questions and answers, watch up to 10 different agency-produced videos about various forestry topics on a self-service touchscreen TV and view three wall-covering, mural-style wall displays that purvey the recreational, economic and ecological aspects of forestry.

“This project is a dream come true for us,” said Schnabel of his and Foley’s longheld vision for the space. “The transformation that we were able to achieve is the culmination of months of intense collaboration between our staff and the vendor. I’m just so pleased that we’ve managed to convert this previously unimpressive space into a learning laboratory for forestry.”



One of the new large wall displays extols the recreational benefits of forests, Harbison State Forest in particular.



This shadowbox-style display gives visitors a rundown of all the ecological services that our forests provide, including clean air, clean water, wildlife and carbon storage.



No forestry exhibit would be complete without mentioning the economic impact of forestry!

Invasive Bradford Pear and Other Species to be Banned for Sale in SC

South Carolina will become only the second state in the United States to ban the nursery sale of Bradford pear trees and any other pear trees grown on the commonly used *Pyrus calleryana* rootstock. The ban on sales will begin **Oct. 1, 2024**, which is the annual nursery licensing renewal date in South Carolina. Ohio will become the first state on Jan. 1, 2023, after passing regulations banning the sale of the species in 2018 with a 5-year grandfathering period.

The additions of *Pyrus calleryana* — or Callery pear — along with three species of *Elaeagnus* to the State Plant Pest List met the approval of state agency representatives and the director of Clemson's Regulatory and Public Service Programs. The clock is now ticking on a grandfathering period of a little more than three years for the nursery industry to comply with the new regulations by ceasing sale of these plant species.

While the ban on these plants will make them illegal to sell or trade within South Carolina, it's important for the public to know it will not be illegal to possess them on their property or to keep what they have. "In regulating a plant that's actively traded in the nursery industry that is known to be invasive, you have to start somewhere. We believe that by listing these plants now and continuing to encourage citizens to remove what they have, we can, in time, eliminate them from the landscape and thereby eliminate their deleterious effects on the landscape and environment," said Steven Long, the state's State Plant Regulatory Official and chairman of the South Carolina Invasive Species Advisory Committee.

"It has all the characteristics of a



Bradford pears are one of worst invasive plant species in the region

noxious weed," said David Coyle, assistant professor of Forest Health and Invasive Species at Clemson. Bradford pears were once touted as sterile, but it turns out that if pollen from any other *Pyrus* species gets into Bradford pear flowers, the trees can make viable seeds. Those seeds are then eaten by birds and other animals and spread across the Southeastern landscape, contributing directly to one of the worst invasive plant species in the region — the Callery pear. Noxious weeds are weeds that have been designated by an agricultural or other governing authorities as a plant that is injurious to crops, ecosystems, humans or livestock.

Not only do Callery pears have nasty thorns that can damage everything from tractor tires to livestock, but they also damage the ecosystem by crowding out native plants while providing little to no food for insects. "There are several ways to attack the problem, and one of those ways is to just stop it from being sold," Coyle said. "As part of Clemson Extension's Bradford Pear

Bounty program, we're trying to teach consumers that there are better things to plant and, essentially, teach them not to buy those non-native species. But you can't reach everyone that way, so we're trying to come at it from another way and just make it illegal to sell them."

Typically, when a species is added to the State Plant Pest List, the change goes into effect immediately and it becomes illegal to move or sell it that same day. But since the Bradford pear and other similar cultivars are being actively sold, officials felt a transition period was required for the benefit of industry. "That's no short process," Long said. "There are nurseries that have lots of money invested in Bradford pear crops because they had no idea that it was being made illegal. Without giving them some lead time, you're going to cost folks a whole lot of money. That's why we supported the 3-year grandfathering period."

Along with *P. calleryana*, three (of several) species of *Elaeagnus* — *Elaeagnus umbellata*, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* and

Elaeagnus pungens — were also added to the State Plant Pest List, which includes all the species of plants, insects and otherwise that are regulated in the state.

The efforts have been spearheaded by the South Carolina Invasive Species Advisory Committee, which is required by law to include members from Clemson's Department of Plant Industry (the State Plant Regulatory Official), the USDA State Plant Health Director, a Clemson Cooperative Extension representative and at least two at-large representatives from other stakeholder agencies, such as the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, S.C. Forestry Commission or S.C. Department of Agriculture, and also includes the South Carolina Green Industry Association. The committee meets annually to review the list of

invasive species for additions and deletions, as well as to discuss new pests on the horizon that could soon become a factor.

But the process wasn't nearly as simple as getting the committee together and making the call. All told, it was a two-year journey from the Committee making its recommendation to the director receiving and processing the information. Much of the delay was caused by COVID and the inability to meet according to internal mandates. Once received, the next step was to gauge industry stakeholders on the feasibility of making the species illegal.

Long said surveys were sent out and open forums were held, resistance to the ban was minimal and industry support was high. The next step was to gain approval from Clemson's Director

of Regulatory Services & Public Service Programs, Stephen Cole.

"I was very vocal in our advisory committee meeting — that this is something we need to do," said Coyle, who two years ago began the Bradford Pear Bounty program, which allowed residents to exchange Bradford pears for up to five young, healthy, native trees free of charge. "And I realize that stopping the sale of Callery pear in South Carolina is not going to magically wipe out Callery pear in the eastern U.S., but we've got to take some steps somewhere. I think there's value in being one of the first or leading states to take these steps. It's setting an example," Coyle added.

<https://news.clemson.edu/invasive-bradford-pear-3-other-species-to-be-banned-for-sale-in-sc/>

Walterboro Becomes a Tree City USA

Congratulations to Walterboro on becoming South Carolina's newest Tree City USA!

The Tree City USA program has been greening up cities and towns across America since 1976. It is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees.

More than 3,400 communities have made the commitment to becoming a Tree City USA. They have achieved Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound

urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department,

having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day.

There are 43 Tree City USA communities in South Carolina. See the updated numbers for South Carolina on the next page.

The Tree Cities in South Carolina are: Aiken, Anderson County, Beaufort, Bennettsville, Camden, Charleston, Cheraw, Chesterfield, Clemson, Clinton, Columbia, Conway, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Fountain Inn, Greenville, Hartsville, Hilton Head Island, Irmo, James



Members of Walterboro's Tree Protection Committee accepted the Tree City USA award and flag from Urban Coordinator Frances Waite. From left to right, Committee members Mike Ferrari, Coastal Regional Forester Calvin Bailey, Walterboro Parks Director Ryan McLeod, Frances Waite and Mitzi Carter.

Island, Joint Base Charleston, Lexington, Manning, Marion, McClellanville, Mount Pleasant, Myrtle Beach, Newberry, North Augusta, North Myrtle Beach, Patrick, Rock Hill, Shaw AFB, Sullivan's Island, Summerville, Sumter, Surfside Beach, Tega Cay, Town of Bluffton, Town of Winnsboro, Travelers Rest and Walterboro.

URBAN FORESTRY

—Frances Waite



TREE CITY USA
An Arbor Day Foundation Program

Tree City USA Summary

SOUTH CAROLINA

2020

BY THE NUMBERS

43
TREE CITY USA
COMMUNITIES
1 NEW

23.26%
OF STATE
LIVES IN A TREE CITY
USA COMMUNITY

100% RECERTIFICATION RATE



REPORTED NUMBER OF
TREES PLANTED

8,487

LARGEST

Anderson County
POPULATION 157,161

SMALLEST

Patrick
POPULATION 342

LONGEST-RUNNING
ACTIVE TREE CITY USA
COMMUNITY:
Columbia
42 YEARS

\$10,711,671

SPENT ON
URBAN FORESTRY
MANAGEMENT



\$8.94
average per capita

Growth Award

4 Growth Award
Recipients

LONGEST ACTIVE GROWTH AWARD

Florence
16 YEARS

0 NEW Growth
Award Recipients

BEYOND TREE CITY USA



**TREE
CAMPUS**
HIGHER EDUCATION

An Arbor Day Foundation Program

7 Recognized
South Carolina Schools

0 NEWLY
Recognized Schools



TREE LINE USA
An Arbor Day Foundation Program

3 Tree Line USA
Utilities

LONGEST ACTIVE UTILITY:

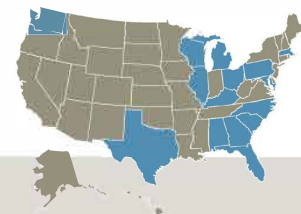
Gaffney Board of Public Works
21 YEARS



**TREE
CAMPUS**
HEALTHCARE

An Arbor Day Foundation Program

Recognized Healthcare Facilities:



Arbor Day Foundation®
arborday.org

500851

Timber Product Output Survey Participants Receive Wood Mill Map

Since 2018, the Timber Product Output (TPO) survey has been conducted annually for a stratified random sample of the almost 100 primary mills operating across our state.

This year, with COVID travel restrictions limiting our opportunities to visit with industry personally, we provided an added incentive to survey participants. For each survey conducted we provided a complimentary 19" x 24" solid wood map of wood-using mills.

The maps were produced by a homegrown company from Ridgeland, South Carolina, called Fire & Pine. The signs consist of laser-etched 1-inch thick white pine boards.

FOREST RESOURCE

—Scott Danskin

Many thanks to our very own Communications design team and the helpful people at Fire & Pine for making these beautiful maps! And of course, thanks to all the industry participants in this year's survey with 100% of our mills completed by June 1!



Callie Fields of South Carolina Shavings Providers, a happy participant in this year's survey.

Welch Hosts Podcast on Water Protection Programs

Environmental Program Coordinator Holly Welch recently co-hosted a podcast titled "State and Federal Funding Sources for Water Protection" for KeepingForests.org. Holly shared tips for seeking state and federal funding sources for water protection programs.

Listen to Episode 7 on [How the River Flows](#) on their website, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts!

In this episode, Holly speaks with Kara Goodwin and James Kilgo about innovative funding options available for Source Water Protection, a proactive approach to safeguard drinking water quality, and the areas through which water travels. Goodwin works with regional, state and local partners

at the EPA to integrate Source Water Protection across environmental programs. Kilgo is a water protection specialist with the South Carolina Rural Water Association, with experience working with water utilities, forest landowners and watershed-based planning. They discuss the current fiscal challenges

facing water utilities and the growing urbanization of forest lands, explaining emerging funds that support greener infrastructure and partnerships to facilitate those projects, including the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

BMPS

—Tim Adams



Piedmont Assistant Regional Forester Brad Bramlett took this photo of a silhouette of a firefighter in front of flames on Division I July 22.

SCFC Personnel on Western Fire Details

Bramlett's Bootleg Fire Assignment in Oregon

Piedmont Assistant Regional Forester Brad Bramlett went on a western fire assignment as a Public Information Officer (PIO) for the Bootleg Fire in Oregon.

He flew out to Medford, Oregon July 11 and arrived at Chiloquin in south central Oregon July 12. The small town of Chiloquin was the Incident Command Post (ICP) for Zone 2 at Chiloquin High School (the fire was so big, it was divided into two zones).

Brad started off assisting with public calls, as there had recently been several evacuations established and several homes destroyed by the fire. Information flow to the public was crucial. They gave out information on

evacuation zones, resources for Ready, Set, Go! Campaign, road closures and shelters. Each morning Brad had to gather information from the team and email it out to an established group of media, concerned citizens, cooperators and ranchers.



Piedmont Assistant Regional Forester Brad Bramlett stands by a big root ball.

He also helped out on a 'trap line.' A trap line is a pre-determined route with specific locations for information boards. Each information board had the Bootleg Wildfire map, QR codes to sign up for evacuation alerts, Daily Update Report, Ready, Set, Go! Info,



K-Max Type 1 Heavy Lift Helicopter.

etc.

About half way through the assignment, fire activity kept growing, so Brad and another PIO (Jacob, who was a former smoke jumper) were transferred to the ZX Spike Camp near Silver Lake. They were the only two PIOs that were single resource/ fireline qualified. Jacob and Brad took several media personnel out to the fireline. The last three days, they also started conducting night ops. This involved going out to interview the night shift personnel, and taking nighttime photos and videos.

The Bootleg Fire was the largest wildfire in the country at that time. This assignment was very challenging and busy, but also rewarding for Brad. His last day working before he demobed, a Type 1 IMT from Alaska arrived. He got to meet a few of their team members. Brad gained a lot of new knowledge and experience on this assignment that he will be able to use back here with our agency. Brad said, "I highly recommend to those employees 'on the fence' about going on a western assignment to go for it!"

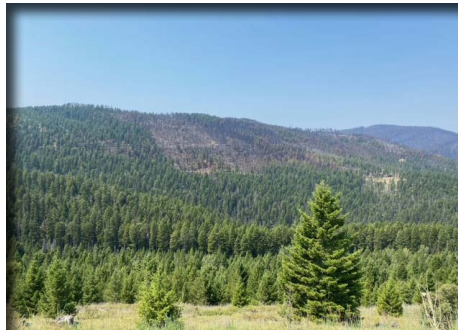
Holt's Western Assignment in Montana

Black River Unit Forester Ron Holt went on a western fire assignment July 23-August 7 to the Anderson Hill Fire located an hour east of Missoula, Montana.

Ron was assigned as a Task Force Leader working for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), which is Montana's equivalent to the SC Forestry Commission. He met with their local Assistant Fire Management Officer and later Fire Management Officer out of the Missoula Unit Office and was assigned to the Anderson Hill Fire which was a 700+



Ron digging out a smoke before it rolls down hill then calling in an engine crew to work it.



View of the Romeo/Oscar Division side of the fire.

acre fire.

Ron had two trainees over the next few days and then became the Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4) for a few hours during the transfer and then became the Incident Commander Type 5 (ICT5) for the remaining nine days or so with the ability to assist local resources with any initial attack. Ron's group was also tasked to protect local structures in the area as well as Garnet Ghost Town, a historic mining town with various buildings still present.

As he took over the fire it became a patrol and mop-up mission. Each morning he briefed crews on their tasks for the day and set up an Incident Within an Incident protocols. Then he would patrol a section of the fire, seek out problem spots, and also stage at a lookout in order to guide crews to various smoke that would rise. Ron also went on an initial attack while enroute to demob on the last day of his 14-day assignment.

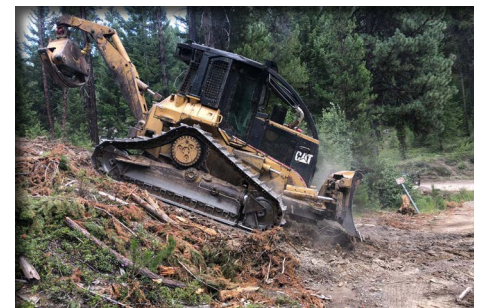
Ron enjoyed his Montana experience. They treated Ron well and made him feel a welcome part of their team.

Ron said, "Several of my personnel have gone out on western assignment this year: Terry Cook, GraceAnna Cooper, Jacqueline Welch, Clay Cooper and Caleb Watson. It's a great year for experience!"

Webb's Assignment at the Granite Pass Complex

Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector FMO Colton Webb had a 21-day assignment on the Granite Pass Complex near Lolo, Montana. Colton was a heavy equipment boss trainee from July 22 -Aug. 13.

When asked about going out west on assignment Colton replied, "I highly recommend anyone that's looking for an adventure or a challenge to try an assignment either in camp or on a



A Cat 527 grapple skidder, capable of climbing extreme slopes. When other machines are unable to make progress, this machine shined.



Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Sector FMO Colton Webb at the Devoto Cedar Grove across the pass in Idaho.

line. Everyone is highly valued and plays an important roll in containing the incident.”

He adds, “I promise you will love the memories! It also brings back training and experience that would otherwise be untapped.”

Scenes from the Dixie Fire in California

Georgetown/Williamsburg Project Forester GraceAnna Cooper sent in these photos from her western fire assignment on the Dixie Fire in California where she was assigned as a Heavy Equipment Crew Boss. In the top photo, the dozers were battling a 2,000-acre spot fire on the east side of the fire near Janesville. In the bottom photo, fire conditions were bad Aug. 31 in the Grizzly Valley. It was a red flag day with single-digit humidity and 40+ mph winds, which shifted and ended up coming out of the east after predicted winds were from the southwest. GraceAnna took the photos from their safety zone at the mouth of the Grizzly Valley near Portola.



Law Enforcement Chief Swears In Three New Officers



Law Enforcement Chief Tommy Mills, left, swore in three new officers June 29 at the Columbia headquarters: Georgetown Sector FMO Jon Thomas, Chesterfield/Lancaster Sector FMO Glen Lampley and Aiken/Barnwell Sector FMO John Wilson.

Law Enforcement Chief Tommy Mills swore in three new officers June 29.

Georgetown Sector FMO Jon Thomas and Chesterfield/Lancaster Sector FMO Glen Lampley graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy Basic Law Enforcement Course June 11. Aiken/Barnwell Sector FMO John Wilson graduated June 25.

Jon Thomas was a Distinguished Graduate. A Distinguished Graduate is one that has a 96 or better average on all written tests and passes all practical test on the first attempt. Congratulations, Jon! And congratulations to all three on their graduation.



Tonya Towne, Robert Carter and Leoncia Cruz race to collect worms for the PLT activity "Birds and Bugs."

Facilitators Trained to Lead PLT, WET and WILD Workshops

Fourteen new facilitators were trained to lead Project Learning Tree, Project WET and Project WILD professional development events July 28-29. This Triple Facilitator Workshop was held at the USFWS and USFS Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center in Awendaw. SC PLT Coordinators Matt Schnabel and Beth Foley helped lead this workshop along with the SC Project WET Coordinators Lynn Pilewski and Chaneen Halder and

the new SC Project WILD Coordinators, Sarah Whitmire and BeBe Harrison. This was the first training held by SC Project WILD's new sponsoring organizations, Conestee Nature Preserve and SC Wildlife Federation.

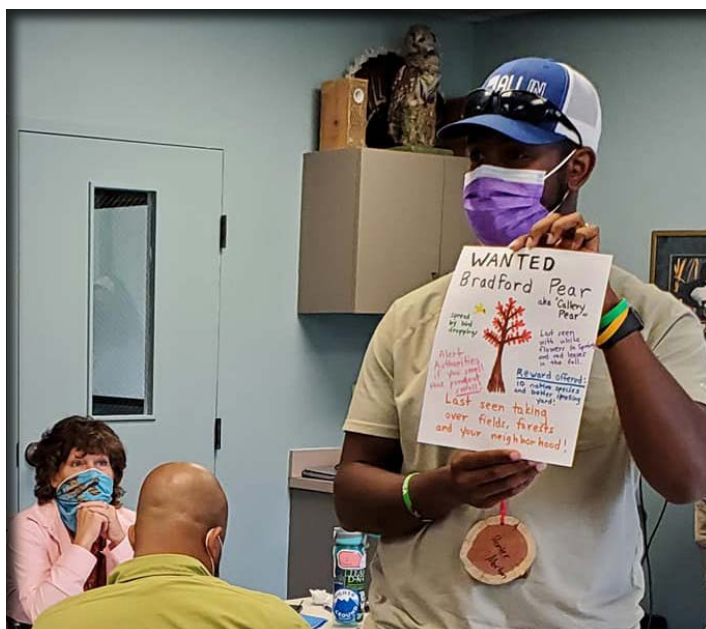
A mix of formal and non-formal educators from across the state attended this two-day training and participated in various hands-on activities from all three projects. They were trained to facilitate educator workshops in any of the guides from the three programs.

They are now ready to use these environmental education resources to teach youth about the conservation of our planet's natural resources.

Congratulations to the newest facilitators Josh Castleberry with Central Carolina Technical College, Jessica Kochman with Port Royal Sound Foundation, Tanya Towne with Joe Adair Center, Ernest Manning with Fairfield County Schools, Courtney Felton with SC Aquarium, Leoncia Cruz with Nature as a Teacher, Amy Ellisor and Karen Mott with Camp Discovery, Jessica Runyon, Rachel Kennerly with Irmo Chapin Rec Commission, Deb Straub, Alonzo McDonald with Manning High School FFA, Robert Carter with Museum of York County, and Hunter Morton with the SC Governor's School for Agriculture & Forestry.

EDUCATION

—Beth Foley



Hunter Morton shows off his Bradford pear WANTED poster from the PLT activity "Invasive Species."

SC PLT Facilitator Refresher at Harbison State Forest

SC Project Learning Tree (PLT) Facilitators gathered from across the state at Harbison State Forest July 20 for an annual refresher and reunion. A facilitator is someone who has been trained to lead PLT professional developments events for adults who teach youth about forestry, conservation and the environment. Adults use the activities from the different PLT guides for preschool through high school children. Facilitators come from many different backgrounds but all share the same mission to educate our youth about natural resource conservation.

EDUCATION
—Matt Schnabel

At the refresher, facilitators first learned about changes to the national and state PLT programs. Then everyone was trained in the brand new *Explore Your Environment K-8 Activity Guide* by Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley and Environmental Education Coordinator Matt Schnabel. The new guide contains 50 activities that are correlated to SC Department of Education standards in math, science, social studies, and English language arts and are used by formal and non-formal educators.

After lunch from Groucho's Deli, facilitators took a tour of Harbison State Forest given by HSF Forest Manager Trip Miller and Recreation Specialist Brad Phillips, stopping at different sites to see and learn how the forest is managed for multiple uses. They saw the results of a recent fuel-chip, final harvest and seed-tree harvest operation and learned that



HSF Recreation Specialist Brad Phillips and Forest Management Chief Russell Hubright explain management strategies near the Crooked Pine Trail.



Facilitators and coordinators standing in front of a recent growing-season burn site.

the state forests generate income to finance their operations, maintenance and to pay staff salaries. Facilitators learned how prescribed fire is used to manage forests for regeneration, site preparation and wildfire risk reduction at multiple stands in the forest.

SC PLT facilitators present at HSF represented a wide array of education and natural resource organizations: Florence

County School District 3, SC Forestry Commission, Richland and Orangeburg Soil & Water Conservations Districts, Clemson Extension Forestry, Rock Hill School District, Hobcaw Barony Discovery Center, University of SC, and the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory.

More information about the new *Explore Your Environment K-8 Activity Guide* can be found at: www.plt.org.



Children complete their activity guide for a reward.

Junior Forester Program Launches at Harbison State Forest

Looking for something fun AND educational to do with your children on weekdays this summer? Come out to Harbison State Forest to participate in the Forestry Commission's new Junior Forester program!

Families can visit the state forest's Environmental Education Center to check out a backpack loaded with

nature investigation supplies. They'll also receive a grade level appropriate activity book (K-2 or 3-5) containing hands-on learning experiences that the children will complete while taking a self-guided hike in the forest.

"I'm so excited to unveil this program for families who visit the forest. With the school year ending, this is a great way to get children outside while continuing their learning over the summer," said Assistant Environmental Education Coordinator Beth Foley. "The self-guided program is designed for families to learn together as they explore the forest."

Armed with a clipboard, magnifying lens, binoculars and other tools, children embark on fun activities like a "Cool Critters" scavenger hunt," a seed-collecting mission, a tree ring study and wildlife tracking adventure, among others.

Once the activity guide has been completed, the children bring it back to the Ed Center where they will receive a signed Junior Forester certificate, a wooden Junior Forester



Forest Resource Analyst Scott Danskin's son JD (right) and his friend Gunner look at an organism up close in a viewfinder while participating in the Junior Forester activity July 9 at Harbison State Forest.

badge and a Smokey Bear "schwag bag."

EDUCATION

—Beth Foley

The Junior Forester program is free of charge and available from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are encouraged. Please call Beth Foley at (803) 896-8890 to make a reservation or to ask questions about the program.



The Fender family was the first to complete the Junior Forester program! (left to right) Douglas, Dena, Virginia, and Waylon.

FIRE WEATHER OUTLOOK

SOUTHERN AREA

The eastern Carolinas are forecast to have above normal significant fire potential through fall and into winter, with above normal potential possible in portions of eastern Virginia and farther upstate in the Carolinas this fall into early winter. Portions of western Oklahoma and west into central Texas may have above normal significant fire potential during December, with increasing potential expected in January and February across the western half of Oklahoma and west Texas into portions of central and south Texas. Much of Florida into southern Georgia is expected to have above normal significant fire potential during winter.

Fire activity remained near to below normal across the Southern Area in October due to timely precipitation and areas that remained relatively dry, had antecedent above normal rainfall and soil moisture values. Additionally, limited critical fire weather conditions emerged over the geographic area during the month, which helped mitigate fire activity. The entire geographic area had above normal October temperatures, with the greatest temperature anomalies observed in Virginia and portions of Kentucky and Tennessee. Portions of Oklahoma, central Texas into Hill Country, and the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys into the southern Appalachians and Florida Panhandle coast had above normal precipitation during October.

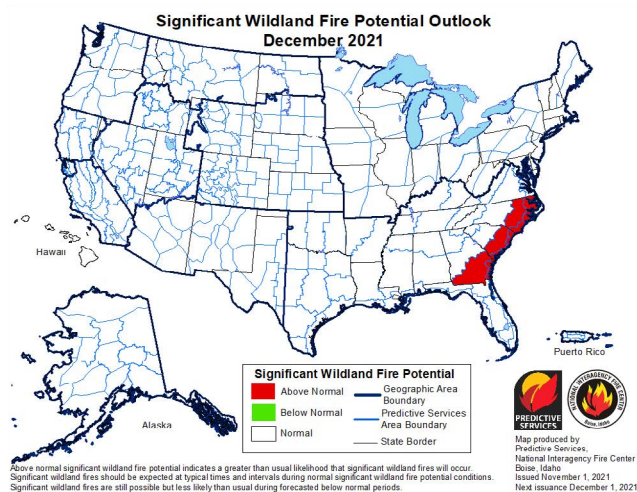
The eastern Carolinas, Florida, Lower Mississippi Valley, ArkLaTex region, and portions of west and south Texas observed below normal precipitation.

Portions of Florida, Texas, the Carolinas, and southeast Georgia have dead fuel moisture values near to below average and have experienced higher evaporative demand over the last one to two months. However, recent and forecast rainfall will mitigate fire weather concerns at least temporarily. There are concerns regarding fuels as well above normal fuel loading in portions of western and central Texas and Oklahoma and fuels entering dormancy across geographic area with fall leaf drop will contribute to fire activity in the coming months.

The ongoing La Niña and other teleconnection patterns, long-range forecast guidance, and analogs, indicate that above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation are expected across most if not all the Southern Area through winter. According to CPC, drought is likely to expand and intensify across much of Oklahoma and Texas, in portions of the Carolinas and southeast Georgia, and in Florida outside of the panhandle through January. The lack of drought in other portions of the geographic area should provide a buffer to the forecast warm and dry conditions during the outlook period to preserve significant fire potential at near to below normal.

Given the forecast conditions and antecedent abnormally dry conditions in the eastern Carolinas, above normal potential is forecast through fall and into January. There is some uncertainty regarding above normal potential continuing beyond December and if above normal potential will expand into the southern Appalachians. Though the fall fire season in the southern Appalachians, in general, is highly dependent upon the precipitation frequency, rainfall frequencies beyond one to two weeks can become problematic. The combination of leaf drop, freeze events, and cold front associated winds are amplified by rainfall frequency, leading to increase fire activity, including large and significant fires.

Above normal potential will expand southward into southern Georgia in December and much of Florida outside of the panhandle in January and February. Florida may have above normal potential starting in December. In Oklahoma and Texas, above normal significant potential is expected to emerge by January and perhaps during December. The forecast warm and dry conditions with above normal fuel loading is driving the above normal forecast. Per usual, significant fire activity will likely be limited to shorter-duration, wind-driven events.



—National Interagency Fire Center

CURRENT FIRE NUMBERS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

MONTH AND YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS 5- AND 10-YEAR AVERAGE

Time Period	NOVEMBER		JULY-NOVEMBER		FISCAL YEAR	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
5 Year Average	76	2,457.3	369	3,844.0	1,363	10,869.0
10 Year Average	99	1,444.9	415	3,045.0	1,505	10,305.5
Current FY ¹	33	179.0	198	706.1	198	706.1

¹To date for current fiscal year

